

THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE CASE STUDY OF SIVA SHANKAR BABA - THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL LEADER AS AN ICON OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The lives of the masses are transformed in a phenomenal way by a transformational leader's dynamic quality and abilities, inspiring individuals to achieve greater heights in various spheres. There are several global leaders who have revolutionized the way businesses function and have adopted decisive strategies to develop their society. The varied researches conducted so far have explored at length the capabilities of leaders in various domains.

The leadership skills portrayed by innumerable leaders worldwide are assessed in terms of their achievements and are glorified. But, there are a few giants, whose immense contribution to humanity doesn't feature in the limelight as spiritual leaders who are the role models for countless people in contemporary times.

This paper throws light about one such transformational leader and spiritual giant who has been transforming the lives of lakhs of people around the world. His name is "Siva Shankar Baba", a charismatic person who guides and inspires many individuals towards achieving excellence in all spheres of life.

KEYWORDS: Transformational Leadership, Spirituality, Samratchana, Self-Realization, Siva Shankar Baba & Upliftment

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INTRODUCTION – TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership is a unique trait which is rarely found in today's fast-paced, self-seeking world. Transformational leaders are unique personalities with an epitome of noble qualities, who materialize their ideologies and knowledge into actions which result in productive outcomes of the society, at large. They are selfless people who work towards the upliftment of the masses who lack the right perspective to lead their lives. A transformational leader is one who has enormous confidence and self-esteem with the power to drive individuals to perform efficiently in their task. Such a leader motivates people to excel in all that they do with utmost self-confidence and perseverance. Individuals are subtly guided towards the righteous path which leads them to be the best they can possibly be and, achieve great heights. Many look up to such role models for guidance and moral support and gain the requisite drive to successfully attain their goals.

Tracing down the timelines of history, there were innumerable personalities in varied fields who had transformed the lives of mankind. India has a rich legacy of spiritual gurus who have shown the right path for many to excel in their fields. Our scriptures reflect stories of great *Mahaans* who have endured the pain to uplift the society. They have guided men to attain the ultimate truth of Self Realization, to seek and know the inner self.

In the past, many spiritual leaders like Adi Sankara, Ramanuja, Paramacharya, Kabir Das, Shirdi Sai Baba, Kodi Mahaan, Sathya Sai Baba have acted as ‘social reformers’ and led people into the path of righteousness and set examples for a value-based, meaningful and healthy life.

CASE STUDY: SHIVA SHANKAR BABA – A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER

In contemporary times, Shri Siva Shankar Baba is a great spiritual leader and social reformer who has been working towards guiding innumerable people to realize their inner self. He is an immense source of inspiration to many people who come to him seeking solutions to all their problems in life. Since his entry into spirituality in the year 1984, he has uplifted and transformed the lives of lakhs of people who are all well-settled and successful in various domains. His profound knowledge and experience in different spheres of life combined with his spiritual prowess facilitates in guiding the masses to overcome their worldly problems in an intelligent and effective manner. He is result-oriented and his solutions are practical and simple. He speaks the language of laymen and masses and guides them towards spiritual enlightenment, by helping them realize their inner self. He is a down-to-earth personality and has remarkably contributed towards the well-being of society at large.

Siva Shankar Baba’s History

Siva Shankar Baba’s life started from humble beginnings. Siva Shankaran hails from a small village known as “Alangayam”, Tamil Nadu and was born on 28th January 1949 in a school teacher’s family. He studied well and successfully completed higher education at the Sri Ramakrishna Institution, Coimbatore. He went to the University of Madras, completing his chemistry and post graduations in the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (London), the Indian Institute of Road Transport (Pune) and the Institute of Rail Transport (Delhi). He had a family with two children. His perseverance and business acumen transformed him into a successful businessman in the logistics industry. He ran a logistics company in Chennai, which provided transportation service to various companies. He donned several hats -- as a leading Businessman, Newsreader, President of various Clubs and Associations like the Rotary Club of Annanagar, Member of the Managing Committee of Andhra Chamber of Commerce, Indian Bank’s Association Managing Committee, Railway Advisory Board, President of Goods Transport Association, Joint Advisory Committee of Automobile and Road Transport Association, Indian Road Transport Development Association, and so on. He held more than 45 posts in varied domains at a time. He was a lecturer at Jain College, Meenambakkam and was also simultaneously visiting several Management colleges in Chennai as a Professional Consultant on Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

He was at the pinnacle of fame as a well-known businessman when he attained self-realization at the age of 36. Having a divine bent of mind since childhood, this self-realization experience proved to be a hallmark in his spiritual path.

A Transformation - Siva Shankaran to Siva Shankar Baba

Siva Shankar Baba attained self-realization in the year 1984, characterized by a death-experience during which Raghavendra Swamy blessed him. He had several such experiences afterwards in his spiritual path. In his journey towards seeking God, Baba had met many Mahaans and imbibed spiritual knowledge from them. He had taken to Lord Muruga as his Guru. His Sadhana path was full of divine experiences meeting Gods and Goddesses of varied forms and energy. Many contemporary spiritual gurus like Kodi Mahaan, Yogi Ramsurath Kumar Swamy, Shri Paramacharya have hailed Shiva Shankar as the greatest soul in the spiritual realm and acknowledged his divinity during his encounters with them on several occasions.

Founder of Samratchana – “Total Protection”

Shiva Shankar Baba is the founder of the spiritual organization named “Samratchana” means “Total protection”, the abode of souls seeking to attain God. In the beginning, the organization was started in a small place called Mannadi, Chennai where Baba counselled persons who came to him. He has helped lakhs of people by performing various miracles in everyone’s lives. Needy people flooded his place in search of solutions to their worldly issues like health, marriage, job, child and many more. In the year 1996, he expanded his organization in Neelangarai, Chennai and used to counsel, guide and pray for thousands of people on a daily basis. His miracles continued and many were blessed by him and saw their problems vanish soon after meeting him.

After a few years, “Sree Ramarajya”, a resort-like commune of like-minded families desiring to serve the society, was founded by Baba, in a place called Kelambakkam, Chennai. Baba reiterates that people need not follow him, they just need to flow with him. He is also the founder of a non-profit spiritual organization called “Samratchana” which is in Kelambakkam, Chennai. Samratchana is the abode of souls who believe in the values preached by Baba, and is the last resort to a spiritual seeker. He gives practical solutions to people in distress and has contributed immensely towards leading a value-based living.

Founder of Sushil Hari International Residential School, Kelambakkam

In 2001, Baba founded a school known as “Sushil Hari International Residential School” in Kelambakkam. Since its start, the school has been moulding thousands of children, especially from rural background into excellent human beings. The school caters towards the holistic development of children and doesn’t discriminate based on criteria such as caste, creed or religion, even at the time of admission. All the students at the Sushil Hari School demonstrate talents apart from academics and have won the rolling trophies in many competitions conducted by the Rotary Club for prominent schools in Chennai. The children are encouraged to equip themselves in extracurricular activities of their choice and the teachers cater to the wholesome development of the children. Baba himself teaches Tamil for the Higher Secondary students and follows an experiential teaching methodology. His teaching is highly regarded by the students and his classes are the most sought among the student community. Baba gives a positive outlook to the lives of those who believes him totally. He is less interested in publicity and helps people unconditionally and without judgments.

Founder of a Multi-Specialty Hospital, Kelambakkam

Baba runs a multi-speciality hospital, where most of the facilities and services are free to the community and students. Free medical, vision and dental camps are conducted regularly. Baba also runs an old-age home and a rural training center for the benefit of rural masses.

FACETS OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER AS SEEN IN SIVA SHANKAR BABA

Effective Management

Being the founder of the organization, Baba has formulated a well-managed organizational structure, appointed trustees and decentralized the activities. He oversees the activities and takes care of the minutest of details. His business acumen and rational thinking have a profound impact on his handling of day-to-day activities in the institution and management of human resources. Many who have been benefited by his blessings, love to work as volunteers in his

organization. Volunteers take up tasks of their own choice and that provides an opportunity for them to enhance their skills while simultaneously refining themselves. Volunteers are well recognized and appreciated for their work by Baba. They are provided with greater space and autonomy to carry out their work effectively.

Leadership as a Walk of Life

Shiva Shankar Baba is a charismatic personality with kindness embodied in him. He plans all the tasks very meticulously and effortlessly coordinates and mentors people. He is easily approachable and there are no middle men between him and those seeking solutions from him. He gets his work done through simple people who could imbibe great lessons and cherish working under his instructions. He simplifies the work and gets feedback on the time and progress of each task from the people concerned. He identifies the talent of each individual and provides opportunities to enhance it in a proper way.

Cool Attitude and Down to Earth Personality

The most adorable quality of him is his cool attitude, he never gets angry with anyone. He tries to make people feel very comfortable around him and takes care of all of them effortlessly. He jumps ages and sets a unique wavelength with those who interact with him. During his interactions with people, he gives individual attention to each and every family, even when there is a huge gathering. He guides everyone to utmost perfection. He radiates total positivity and gives solutions on a rational front to any kind of problem. He handles his critics with the utmost calm and effectively solves problems which may surface in the day-to-day management of an organization.

Leads by Setting an Example

Baba shows the righteous path for people to follow and he himself works hard from morning to night in his spiritual journey to serve God. He works for around 18 to 20 hours a day. He schedules his time in a perfect manner, starting early by 4 am, doing exercises and yoga, goes for morning walks, does his daily *Homam*, caters to the administration of the organization, teaches at the school, answers to e-mails, oversees the day-to-day accounts and also spends quality time in reading books and magazines. Even simple tasks, he does with utmost perfection. During his usual morning walks, he oversees the activities and cleanliness of the surroundings, discrepancies if any, even at the minutest level would be sorted out immediately by delegating tasks to the people concerned. In the evenings, from 7pm to 9pm, *Satsangs* would be conducted in the temple in the organization. Baba provides answers to questions raised by people and enriches their minds with divine thoughts. His daily speeches are broadcasted live in YouTube and thousands of his devotees are blessed to watch him daily. He makes sure that “He leads by being an example” and is a role model for millions of people.

Thousands of today’s younger generation has been moulded well by Baba and are following his footsteps to achieve greater horizons in varied fields in many countries around the world. School children who come to study in his school imbibed good values from him. They grow holistically in the divine ambience around him, gaining enormous wisdom and positive approach towards leading a perfect life. He possesses a great temperament and has faced uphill challenges with ease during his path of spiritual upliftment.

There were instances of few unscrupulous elements working towards shattering the good image of Baba. In the year 1999, his organization at Neelangarai was set ablaze with fire by gondas. Even during such occasions, Baba was undeterred and was in the upfront protecting people and within a short span of 10 days, the place was transformed and re-

built again from ashes to look grander and aesthetic. Baba is a true warrior who has turned victorious during many such grim situations and had pronounced utmost courage and valour. True to the words of Sir Winston Churchill,

“In War: Resolution,

In Defeat: Defiance,

In Victory: Magnanimity,

In Peace: Good Will.”

Those who attempted to pull him down were all proved wrong in many instances and are now envying his growth in the spiritual realm.

At the Helm of Creativity

Shiva Shankar Baba has created an institution which exuberates creativity in all aspects. The place is filled with greenery everywhere with creative artifacts, beautiful paintings and sculptures everywhere. He encourages people to create useful things out of waste materials. His acumen in architecture is profound. Baba guides the architects in constructing innovative structures with beautiful art works and sculptures. His plans are simple and cost effective. The Temples and buildings in the organization stand out as masterpieces of architectural marvel.

Spiritualism and Materialism – in Balance

Baba helps individuals create a fine balance between spiritualism and materialism – in being with the world, yet without it, such that, life is meaningful experience where journeying is itself one’s destination. According to Baba, “Renunciation is neither adding anything, nor leaving anything. It is living the life that God has destined upon you with equanimity of mind, always pinning your thoughts on the lotus feet of the Lord.”

Epitome of Good Qualities

In a nutshell, Baba is an epitome of love, divinity, intelligence, empathy, perseverance, hard work, motivation, creative thinking and many more qualities of a transformational leader. His individual efforts have materialized into the creation of a great institution which serves the society in varied ways. He delicately blends formal and informal spiritualism which is tailored to the needs of each individual. He is a great jovialist and has his own style of working with people, focusing on their positives and subtly transforming them into better individuals and enabling them to realize their indwelling divinity – Gods-in-the-making. With his enormous patience he sculpts divine beings out of every individual who trusts him. He is undeterred by the challenges and faces them with immense courage and intelligence. In accordance with Arthur Schopenhauer’s quote, even Baba’s unique transformational leadership has passed through the three stages of criticism, opposition and acceptance.

Great Orator

Baba is a great orator who interacts well with the audience. He speaks flawlessly and his speeches will give answers to those who are contemplating on certain issues in their minds. His speeches are thought-provoking and inspires one to approach life in a rational and positive way. He speaks the language of laymen and leaves the audience spell-bound. He could be quizzed on any topic at any point of time, on which he speaks out without any prior preparation instantly.

Transforming People by his Motivation

Baba gives opportunities for people to work in the field of their choice and talent and are groomed well by his guidance. Baba motivates everyone to take up challenging task to match their abilities. He instills great confidence that one could complete tasks very easily. He encourages school children to learn any kind of extra-curricular activity that matches their talent. He strongly believes “Work is worship” and emphasizes people to work effectively and utilize the resources productively.

Moulding the Younger Generation

The School provides the best of facilities in all the facets helping and moulding children every day. It has been moulded thousands of children in the past decade, culling out their inner potential and motivating them to succeed in all their endeavours. Committed teachers, holistic teaching, learning outcome, state of the art infrastructure, nominal fee structure, excellence in extracurricular activities are the varied positives of the school. The alumni of Sushil Hari are excelling in varied domains and are testimonials for the rich legacy the school has earned over the past decade.

Simplicity Personified

Baba’s contribution to humanity is immense. Baba instills enormous confidence and uplifts the people who come to him. He sets example for others and puts himself into their shoes and thinks for their well-being. He leads a simple life and makes everyone very comfortable around him. He takes care of each and every person individually. He has moulded thousands of children into perfect individuals who are excelling in varied domains.

Cost Effective Approach – Focused on Perfection

Babahas always guided people to think rationally and insists on spending wisely. He reiterates people to save for the future and avoid spending lavishly on marriages and functions. He also conducts marriages free of cost in his place and reiterates on low cost weddings. He is an embodiment of Perfection who is always keen on attaining excellence. His guidance has helped many to focus on achieving excellence even on simple activities in life.

Edifice of Divine Empire - World’s Envy and God’s Pride

Baba’s abode at Kelambakkam is a heaven on earth, which is a divine marvel of great temples catering to different religions and communities. As Baba quotes his organization to be - “World’s envy and God’s Pride”, it’s truly a holistic experience for people living there which is filled with divinity and positive energy. Moreover, the school children are blessed to grow in his presence. They radiate positive energy and their minds are driven towards achieving excellence.

UNIQUE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAITS OF SHIVA SHANKAR BABA AT A GLANCE

- Embodiment of Creativity, Excellence, Love, Care, Empathy
- Advocates simplicity, cost effective work
- Transparency in administration, mentors and counsels people individually
- Oversees the minutest of details
- Decentralization and delegation of authority

- One-man Army – takes responsibility of all outcomes
- Motivates and appreciates the good work of people
- Effective management of people
- Helps the needy at all times without any expectations
- Positive outlook, works relentlessly and guides to achieve the ultimate goals of life i, e to seek and love God
- Artistic view in all endeavours
- Visionary, Passionate and Rationale
- Result oriented approach
- Time management and multi tasker, Workaholic who enjoys doing work
- Freedom and opportunity to innovate for those serving in his institution focused on excellence
- Holistic Approach on all aspects of management
- Cleanliness and management of activities to the minutest of details
- Instills enormous confidence and divine energy in everyone
- Gives shelter to those who believed and came to him
- Advocates not to follow him but learn his good qualities
- In total, Divine embodiment of Perfection– 100% in all spheres of life
- Reflection of God – Beauty, Intelligence, Happiness, good health, creativity, talent in all forms of art
- Famous Saying – “Love is Selflessness, Self is Lovelessness”; “God is the ultimate to be loved, show him love, he will reciprocate that at infinite times, infinite ways”

CONCLUSIONS

Shiva Shankar Baba is a role model for many young people around the world and is greatly admired and loved by people of all age groups. His contribution to the humanity is profound and inexplicable. Words will not suffice to completely explain his qualities in total. He is the founder of an organization – “Samratchana”, the motto of which is “Arise, Awake, Work, Worship”. He is the greatest of spiritual leaders in the contemporary times. One cannot contemplate his spiritual prowess with limited knowledge about spirituality. Nevertheless, one could at least try to realize his self-less nature of care, love, empathy, guidance, support to people at large. Anybody can reach him at any time. His speeches in *Satsangs* during the evenings in his abode “Sree Ramarajya” at Kelambakkam, is being broadcasted daily, live on YouTube. He can be reached through email and responds within 24 hrs. He is a visionary with unique ideologies guiding people to the highest levels of spiritual experience – Self Realization. Baba has travelled around the world and had seen even the Arctic and Antarctic regions. He has innumerable followers around the world who are excelling in different walks of life. He is a mentor, guide, philosopher, spiritual master to many who believed him. He doesn’t depend on anyone to run his institution. He runs his institution with his spiritual prowess and intelligence. He has created a world of his own to help

masses at large. In the contemporary times, it's really hard to see a selfless person like Shiva Shankar Baba, the greatest transformational leader today, who has stood the acid test of time.

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